

## **Cowboys and Indians in American Culture**

**Teacher Seminar, 13 January 2012**

**Speaker: Prof. Dr. Volker Depkat,  
Professur für Amerikanistik, Universität Regensburg**

Organizer: Amerika-Haus-Bibliothek, B.A.Z. Amerika-Haus

Registration fee: € 10

Cowboys and Indians are archetypical American characters that have been omnipresent in U.S. popular culture from the start. Zane Grey, Owen Wister and uncounted other authors wrote highly popular stories about them, and the first American movie – “The Great Train Robbery” of 1903 – was a Western, with many more to come. To this very day, rodeos, Western music shows, and Indian reservations attract large audiences each and every year, while cowboys and Indians continue to be ubiquitous in the world of advertisement. All in all, therefore, the life of cowboys and Indians – like the American West in general – have captured the American imagination from the start, with the world of cowboys and Indians being constructed as a world of manliness and heroism, a world of noble and not so noble savagery, and, finally, a world of a supposedly timeless epic battle between good and bad, right and wrong. This seminar will identify the major patterns of the cultural representations of cowboys and Indians in the diverse contexts of American history, and it will investigate into the question of how things changed over time. However, the seminar will also seek to contrast the cultural constructions of cowboys and Indians with the realities of their life in the American West. The material will be drawn from a broad variety of sources ranging from historical documents and literary texts to visual material like paintings and prints, photographs and movies.

9:00            Cowboys in American Culture

10:30          Coffee break

11:00          Indians in American Culture